

Department of Public Health
and Human Services

Section:
CASE MANAGEMENT

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Subject:
Recertification

Supersedes: FS 1502-1 (10/01/05)

References: 7 CFR 273.2, 7 CFR 273.10(f); 7 CFR 273.14

GENERAL RULE -- After the certification period ends, eligibility must be determined for a new period for a household to continue to participate in the Food Stamp Program. A new application is required if the case is closed for any period of time. A case is considered closed after the effective date of the closure.

RECERTIFICATION PERIODS

Recertification periods are set for 6, 12, or 24 months depending on the household's circumstances. Another program's redetermination date should be coordinated with the food stamp recertification date when it is possible.

A TEAMS generated report listing the recertifications due is available to OPA Case Managers by Document Direct each month prior to the recertification month.

Six month reporting household: A recertification interview is required at least once every 12 months. The recertification month is generally set 12 months from the month the application or recertification is approved. The OPA Case Manager enters the recertification date on the EXAD screen in the 'CERT THROUGH:' field.

EXCEPTION: Homeless households (FS 0-4) are determined eligible for six month recertification periods.

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Change reporting households: A recertification interview is required at least once every 24 months. The recertification month is generally 24 months from the month the application or recertification is approved. One contact with the household is required at least every 12 months. TEAMS will automatically generate and send the F012, FS CHANGE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, notice in the 12th month. This notice serves as the one contact with the household every 12 months.

EXCEPTION: Migrant households are determined eligible for six month recertification periods.

If a household becomes a six month reporting household and has a recertification date already scheduled within six months, the recertification is held as scheduled (FS 1501-3).

Example: A household whose household members are all elderly and/or disabled reports a new source of countable earned income on May 16, 2006 and provides verification on May 26, 2006. The household's recertification date is August 2006.

Timely notice of the decrease cannot be given to the household for June 2006 benefit month. June benefits are authorized by TEAMS cutoff at the May benefit amount. The earned income is countable in the household's budget for July 2006 benefit month. This household is a six month reporting household beginning July 2006. Enter a 'Y' in the 'Six Mo Report' field; enter 0207 in the 'Six Mo Date' field.

Since the already scheduled recertification is within six months, the household completes its scheduled recertification in August 2006. The first Six Month Report is due February 2007, six months from the initial month the recertification is approved.

The F011 system-generated notice is sent to the household.

If the household's gross monthly income now exceeds 130% of poverty of its household size, the OPA Case Manager must delete the F011 system-generated notice and must send the F010 notice to the household. This household's reporting requirement is to complete the Six Month Report.

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If a household becomes a six month reporting household and has a recertification date already scheduled more than six months away, the OPA Case Manager must change the recertification date (shorten certification period) to month six from the initial month of becoming a six month reporting household (FS 1501-3). The OPA Case Manager must send the F014, 6MR-SHORTEN CERT, notice, informing the household that its certification period is shortened due to the household switching from change reporting to six month reporting requirements.

Example: A disabled household reports earned income on September 5, 2005 and provides verification on September 13, 2005. The household's recertification date is June 2007.

The household switches reporting requirements for October 2005 benefit month. Since the already scheduled recertification is more than six months away, the OPA Case Manager changes the recertification date (shortens recertification period) to March 2006. The first Six Month

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Report is due September 2006, six months from the initial month the recertification is approved.

Enter a 'Y' in the 'Six Mo Report' field; enter 0906 in the 'Six Mo Date' field; and enter 0306 in the 'Cert Through' field on EXAD.

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The OPA Case Manager must send the F011 system-generated six month reporting requirement notice and the F014 notice informing the household of its shortened certification period.

RECERTIFICATION FORM

A household receives 'Redetermination/Recertification Report' form, HCS-272, in the month prior to its recertification month. The instructions on the form asks the household to complete and return the report to the Office of Public Assistance (OPA) by the 1st of the month shown on the address label which is the month of recertification.

Example: Reports mailed in May show June on the address label. Households are requested to return the report to the OPA by June 1st.

The report is required to be completed and signed by any responsible adult member of the food stamp household or the authorized representative. Only the signature of one household member is required on the report.

RECERTIFICATION INTERVIEW

At the interview, the OPA Case Manager evaluates the status according to policy of each household member regarding eligible student status, work registration, ABAWD, fleeing felon, drug conviction, parole and probation violators, disability, disqualified members, etc. The OPA Case Manager explains and reviews the household's reporting requirements, the 'Rights and Responsibilities' form, (HCS 220), 'ABAWD Exemption List' form, (HCS 245A), 'Food Stamp Program Work Registration Understanding and Agreement' form, (HCS 543A). Not all households are required to have a household member sign forms (FS 700).

The OPA Case Manager must send the household the recertification interview appointment X034, REDE INTERVIEW TANF/FS, notice informing the household of the date and time of the recertification interview. This notice also informs the household that its benefits will end if the recertification is not completed.

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NOTE: The X034 notice is not considered a 10-day request for information notice. A separate notice after the interview but

prior to authorizing benefits must be sent to the household allowing at least 10 days to provide verification.

The OPA Case Manager must offer all households who meet hardship criteria (FS 103-1) the option of replacing an in-person interview with a telephone interview or a home visit.

TIMELY RECERTIFICATION

Recertification interviews must be scheduled by the 9th day of each month allowing the household sufficient time to provide the necessary verification, and the household the opportunity to participate in the normal month's issuance without interruption of benefits.

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The OPA Case Manager must enter the current date on the RERE and INDA screens and enter through all of the required eligibility determinations screens. If determined eligible, benefits are authorized. The next recertification date is updated on EXAD. If determined eligible at recertification, the OPA Case Manager must send the household the recertification approval F123 notice **and** the appropriate reporting requirement notice on the same day eligibility is determined and approved. If determined ineligible at recertification, the OPA Case Manager must send the household the appropriate denial notice according to the reason for the denial.

If the household does not appear for the scheduled interview, the OPA Case Manager must send the household the missed interview notice F201, RECERT-MISSED INTERVIEW/FORM, no later than the day after the date the interview was scheduled.

The F201 notice serves as a denial notice when a recertification form is submitted by the end of the certification period but the household does not complete an interview. The F201 notice informs the household:

1. To contact the OPA to reschedule a missed interview by the end of the certification period if it wants to recertify for food stamp benefits;
2. If unable to appear in-person for the interview, an interview can be conducted by telephone or a home visit;
3. The recertification form can be submitted in person, through an authorized representative, by fax or other electronic-transmission, or by mail; and,
4. A new application is required if the recertification form is not submitted by the end of the certification period.

**DELAYED
PROCESSING**

The household must reapply for benefits by completing a new application and an interview if the recertification form is not submitted by the last day of the recertification period. However, **IF** a recertification form is submitted within 30 days after the certification period ends, it is accepted as a new application.

Example 1: The household missed the scheduled recertification interview on June 6th. The OPA Case Manager sends the household the F201 notice.

On July 5th, the household submits the recertification form. The recertification form is accepted as a new application, and an interview is scheduled for the earliest available appointment.

An interview is conducted on July 7th, and the OPA Case Manager sends a TEAMS notice to the household requesting the necessary information to process the recertification. The information is to be provided within 10 days. The necessary verifications are submitted on July 11th. If the household is determined eligible, benefits are prorated from July 5th.

Example 2: The household missed the recertification interview on June 6th and calls on June 30th to reschedule the interview. The household meets criteria for a telephone interview, and an interview is conducted June 30th.

The OPA Case Manager sends a TEAMS notice to the household on June 30th requesting the completed and signed recertification form and verification of income to be returned to the OPA by July 10th. The recertification form and income verification are submitted July 11th.

The household is required to reapply by completing a new application and another interview. However, a recertification form was submitted on July 11th, and it is accepted as a new application. The household must be interviewed again at the earliest possible date. If the household provides all the necessary verification to process the recertification and is determined to be eligible, benefits are prorated from July 11th.

Example 3: The household missed the recertification interview on June 6th and did not submit the recertification form. The case is closed effective June 30th.

On July 2nd the household calls and requests an interview. An interview is scheduled at the earliest possible date, and a new application is sent to the household to complete.

There is no requirement that a recertification form be sent to the household instead of a new application. **IF** a recertification form is submitted instead of an application, it is accepted as the new application.

If the household contacts the OPA on or before the last day of the month, an interview must be scheduled for the earliest possible date. After the interview, the OPA Case Manager must send a notice requesting the household provide any necessary information/verification within 10 days of the notice to complete the recertification.

If the information/verification is provided within the 10 days or before the end of the certification period, the OPA Case Manager must determine eligibility for the new certification period **within five working days** of the information/verification being received in the OPA. Benefits are not prorated. If determined eligible, the OPA Case Manager must send F123 **and** the appropriate reporting requirement notices to the household.

If the information/verification is provided within 10 days but the household is determined ineligible, or if the information/verification is not provided within the 10 days or before the end of the certification period, the OPA Case Manager must send the household the appropriate denial notice according to the reason for the denial.

Example: The recertification interview is scheduled for May 5th. The household does not appear for the scheduled interview.

The OPA Case Manager sends the F201 notice no later than the day after the interview was scheduled. The household contacts the office on May 28th requesting the interview be rescheduled. Since the contact was made prior to June 1st, the interview must be rescheduled for the earliest possible date.

The case remains closed until the household is interviewed and completes all recertification requirements. After the interview, the OPA Case Manager must send a notice requesting the household provide any necessary information/verification to complete the recertification within 10 days of the notice.

If the information/verification is provided within the 10 days or before the end of the certification period and the household is determined eligible, the case is reverted to open. The OPA Case Manager must send the household the F123 **and** the appropriate reporting requirement notices.

If the information/verification is not provided within the 10-day request period or before the end of the certification period, or the household provides the information/verification and is determined ineligible, the case remains closed. The OPA Case Manager must send the household the appropriate denial notice according to the reason for denying the recertification.

If a household submits a recertification form and appears for its interview but the recertification was not processed within 30 days of the recertification form being filed due to an agency caused delay (FS 104-1), the recertification is processed and if determined eligible, benefits are not prorated.

If the household submits a recertification form before the end of the certification period but does not appear for the interview or does not submit the required verification, it has 30 days after the end of the certification period to be interviewed and to have the recertification form be treated as a application for recertification.

Example: The household missed its recertification interview on April 5th. The OPA Case Manager sent the household the F201 notice on the day of the missed interview. The household submits its recertification form on April 25th. Another interview is scheduled for the earliest possible date. The household does not show for this interview. No further action is required because the case remains closed.

The household reapplies for benefits on May 18th. The recertification form is treated as an application for recertification. A new application is not required. The information on the recertification form is updated at the interview. The household must be given 10 days via TEAMS notice to provide verification to process the recertification. If determined eligible, benefits are prorated from the date of the interview.

If the household takes the required action before the end of the certification period, benefits are not prorated. If the household takes the

required action 30 days after the end of the certification period, benefits are prorated from the date the household takes the required action.

Example: The household submits its recertification form on April 1st, and it missed its recertification interview on April 5th. The OPA Case Manager sent the household the F201 notice on the day of the missed interview. The household calls April 30th to reschedule its interview. Another interview is scheduled for the earliest possible date.

The household appears for interview on May 6th. A notice is sent requesting required verification to be provided by May 17th.

If the household provides the verification by May 17th and is determined eligible, the OPA Case Manager must send the household the F123 and the appropriate reporting requirement notices. Benefits are not prorated.

If the household does not provide the verification by May 17th, or the verification is provided and the household is determined ineligible, the OPA Case Manager must send the household the appropriate denial notice according to the reason for denying the recertification.

If the household submits the required verification by May 31st, benefits are prorated from the day the verification is provided.

If a household files an application within 30 days after the end of the certification period, the application is processed as an application for recertification. Benefits are prorated from the date the new application is filed.

VERIFICATION AT RECERTIFICATION

Unchanged information does not need to be verified at recertification unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, or outdated (FS 103-5). The following information must be verified:

1. Change(s) in income if the source has changed or the amount has changed by more than \$50. Verification of income is not required if the source has not changed and if the amount is unchanged or has changed by \$50 or less unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or outdated.

NOTE: Generally, income that fluctuates from month to month changes more than \$50 and is verified at recertification.

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2. Previously unreported utility expenses, utility expenses if the source changed, and previously reported but not verified utility expenses. Verification of utility costs claimed by the household that has not changed is not required unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, or outdated.
 3. Previously unreported medical expenses and total recurring medical expenses that changed by more than \$25. Verification of total medical expenses claimed by the household that have not changed or have changed by \$25 or less is not required unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, or outdated.
 4. Change(s) in the household's legal obligation to pay child support, the obligation amount, and monthly amount of child support the household actually pays to a non-household member. Verification of reported unchanged information is not required to be verified unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or outdated.
 5. An able bodied adult without dependents who is meeting the work requirement by working, participating in the Food Stamp Employment and Training program or by participating in a work program that is not operated or supervised by the state, the individual's work hours must be verified.
 6. Other information that has changed, such as rent/mortgage, home-owner's insurance, property taxes, dependent care, student status, fleeing felon, drug conviction, etc. Unchanged information is not required to be verified unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or outdated.

**NOTICE
REQUIREMENTS**

If a household is determined eligible at recertification, the OPA Case Manager must send the household the recertification approval F123 notice, the appropriate reporting requirement notice, **and** the X010, SCHOOL BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM, notice must be sent to all households with school-aged children on the same day eligibility is determined and approved. If the household is determined ineligible, the OPA Case Manager must send the household the appropriate denial notice according to the reason for denying the recertification.

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**RECERTIFICATION
DOCUMENTATION**

The OPA Case Manager must document in case notes in sufficient detail so individuals reviewing the case (Hearing Officers, Management Evaluation Reviewers, Program Integrity Auditors, Claims and Recoveries Financial Investigators, Quality Assurance Specialists, Supervisors, federal auditors, etc.) can determine the reasonableness and accuracy of the prospective eligibility determination and benefit amount.

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The OPA Case Manager must document in case notes the date of the interview, who was interviewed, and if the interview was in-person, by telephone, or at a home visit.

Income - list the dates paid, the gross amount of income per pay period, the number of hours worked, and the income calculation used to prospectively budget the income.

If a pay period is unusually high or unusually low, the OPA Case Manager documents the reason the check was unusually high or low by asking the household or the employer (unpaid sick days, unpaid vacation, worked extra because short staffed, etc.). The case note includes the reason the check was included in the income calculation or the reason the check was not included in the income calculation based on either the household or the employer anticipating or not anticipating it to occur again for the prospective period.

Expenses - list any expenses that changed and the verification used to verify the expense.

Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents - list any changes in an ABAWD time limited benefits.

Other Information - list any changes such as expenses, resources, household composition, etc. and the verification used to verify the change.

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